



The Vanity of Pleasure – Ecclesiastes 2:1

I said in my heart, “Come now, I will test you with pleasure; enjoy yourself.” But behold, this also was vanity.

God’s creation is a wonderful thing. By design, God has provided us with many great blessings that are meant to be enjoyed. God desires for us to enjoy life. Creation was made for our enjoyment. Prior to the introduction of sin, this would have been far more evident. Sin not only made it more challenging to enjoy the pleasures of this life, but introduced a twisted desire in us for the enjoyment of those pleasures outside of a relationship with God.

Think back to the story of God walking in the cool of the evening in the garden just after Adam and Eve had eaten the forbidden fruit in Genesis 3. One can easily imagine that this was not a unique event. It seems entirely plausible that this was a routine that God had with the crown of His creation. Desiring to further His relationship with Adam and Eve, God would join them for an evening walk. Imagine what those conversations might have been like. This may be a key part of our experience with God in heaven. Time with God, growing in relationship with Him.

However, sin’s impact on how we relate to God has also altered the pleasures of the world and our relation to them. It is not wrong to desire to take pleasure in this life. The struggle is that true pleasure, lasting pleasure comes from the enjoyment of God’s creation within the context of His design and will. When we, in our sinfulness, separate God from the pleasures of this world, we end up chasing after cheap substitutes.

An examination of the seven deadly sins reveals this to be true. Each of the seven deadly sins takes an aspect of our relationship to others and the things of this world, things that should bring us pleasure, and twists them into forms that are no longer capable of providing any lasting enjoyment. Like a diet of nothing but cake, the sweetness eventually turns in our stomachs, leaving us simultaneously desiring for more pleasure and hungover in the pursuit.

Thoughts for Reflection

How can you pursue authentic pleasure in Christ rather than the sin corrupted pleasures of this world?